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Rockefeller, John Davison

The work of International House

[New York]

[1923]

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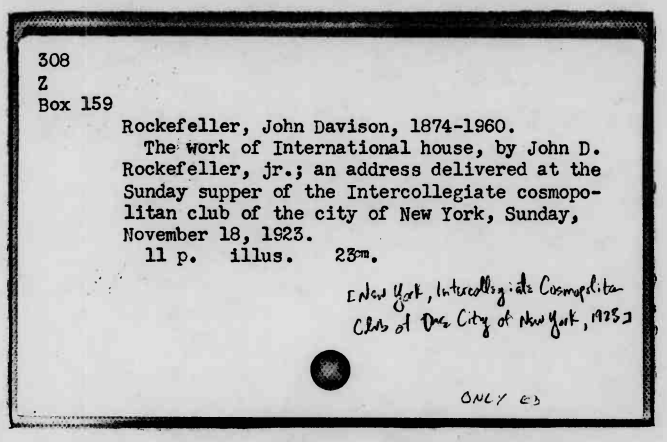

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Rockefeller, John Davison, 1874-1960.
The work of International house, by John D. Rockefeller, jr.; an address delivered at the Sunday supper of the Intercollegiate cosmopolitan club of the city of New York, Sunday, November 18, 1923.
11 p. illus. 23cm.

[New York, Intercollegiate Cosmopolitan Club of the City of New York, 1923]

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The Work of International House

By

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, JR.

An address delivered at the Sunday Supper of the Intercollegiate Cosmopolitan Club of the City of New York, Sunday, November 18, 1923

Cfo May 22, 1924
Act

THE WORK OF INTERNATIONAL HOUSE

By JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, Jr.

Whenever I pass up Riverside Drive, I invariably pause near Grant's Tomb to look at the new home of this Club. The fine architecture and good lines of the building are most pleasing to the eye; its simplicity and its size are symbols of the Club's lack of ostentation, its potentialities. The height of the structure, dominating the surroundings, and its two towers, suggest the far flung horizon of the Club's influence. Then my eye turns to Grant's Tomb and rests upon the inscription on it —"Let us have Peace." And I wonder what inscription will be placed over the door of International House. Will the word "peace" be there ? We sometimes think of peace as the summum bonum to be had at any cost. But who would want a dishonorable peace ? Only as peace is just and worthy is it to be desired. Surely the idea of peace will be in the inscription, for no one thing is more generally longed for throughout the world today than peace. Never was it more eagerly desired. Peace is not a characteristic or quality that can be acquired. It is a state, a condition, which is created by or is the result of the existence of certain qualities or factors. These factors are :

First, justice—even-handed, universal. Justice for the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant. In how many countries it seems to be true that the poor do not get justice; not infrequently is this equally true of the rich. Justice for all, justice irrespective of race, color or creed. Justice is one of the prime requisites of a happy human state. We owe justice to our fellow men regardless of whether we know them or not, whether we like them, whether we ever see them,—irrespective of who or what they may be. Justice is due as a matter of right, duty, wholly apart from feeling and inclination; it is owed to an enemy as well as to a friend. Nothing is more conducive to discontent and bitterness and enmity than injustice. Where, therefore, justice reigns, the causes of friction, of animosity, between men are greatly reduced and peace is more likely to prevail.

But something more than justice is needed, if there is to be peace. To justice must be added good will. Good will implies kindness, tolerance, generosity and many other qualities which will come to your minds, which temper justice, cold

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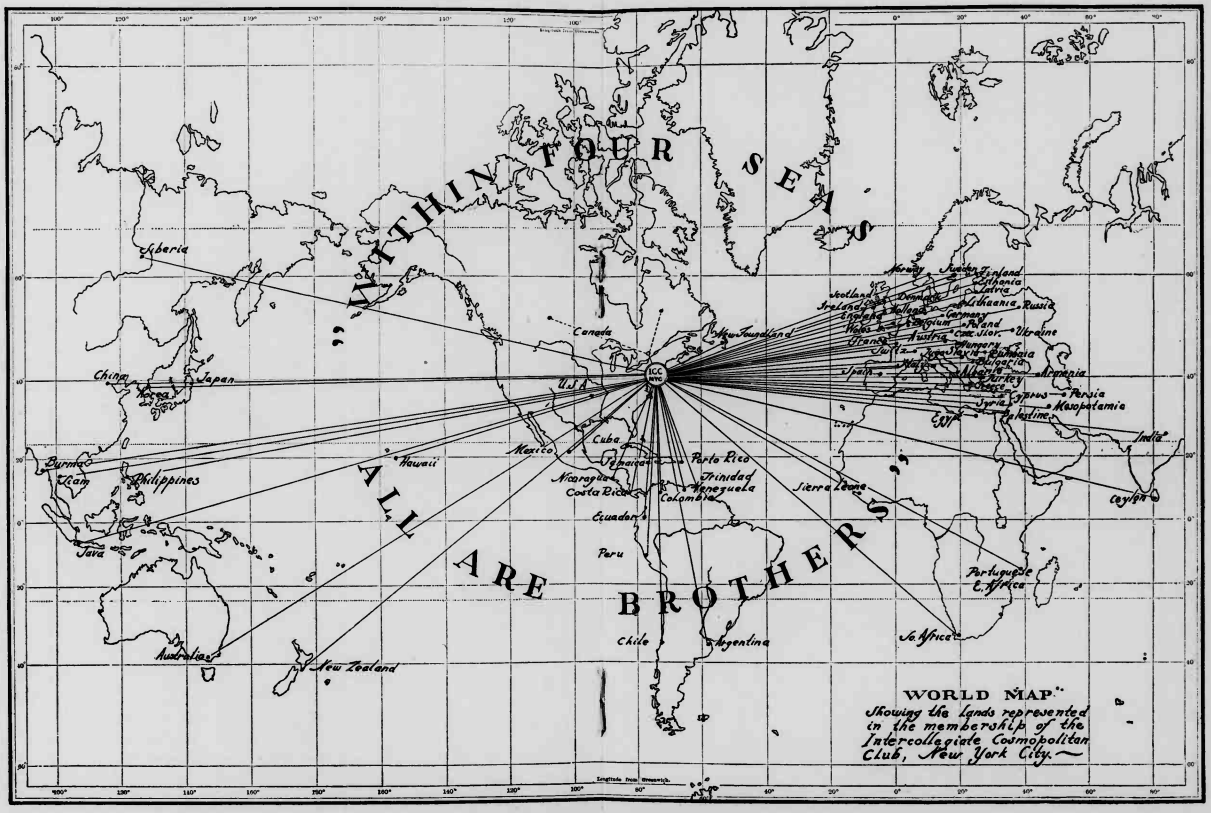


WORLD MAP
Showing the lands represented in the membership of the Intercollegiate Cosmopolitan Club, New York City.

At present the membership of the Club consists of 821 students from 64 different lands studying in 52 colleges, universities, and professional schools of greater New York.

China with 126 members heads the list of foreign countries represented in the Club. Japan comes next with 66, Canada 60, Philippines 45. The names of other countries are indicated in the above chart.

Excepting the United States, Canada has given the largest number of women —47, Japan 17, France 15, China 13, Norway 11, Finland 9, Russia 7. The American women membership is 122.

The largest number of men comes from China—113, United States 68, Japan 49, Philippines 39, Greece 16, Poland 14, Canada, Russia and India 13 each, Sweden 11.

Total number of women in the Club is 337 and men 484.

Grouping of members according to continents is as follows: Asia 280, North America 251, Europe 233, South America 32, Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific Islands 14, Africa 11.

The religions represented are Brahmanism, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Judaism, Hinduism, Jainism, Mohammedism, Zoroastrianism. Of the Christian churches the following are represented:—Catholic, Christian Science, Greek Orthodox, Gregorian, Nestorian, Protestant and Quaker.

and stern, and make it warm and human. Good will is like oil poured upon the troubled waters. It lubricates the relations of human life and prevents the little frictions which are so easily exaggerated and grow into causes of dislike and enmity. Where justice and good will exist, peace is more apt to be found.

Still another quality is essential to peace, and that is brotherhood. It is true that brothers sometimes quarrel, as our Civil War testified; sometimes they do not agree, they are not always at peace; but after all, blood is thicker than water. I well remember in my boyhood days being frequently in a family where there were eight children. And far be it from me to say that they did not often quarrel, and quarrel bitterly. But let an outsider say anything derogatory to a member of that family, and immediately the whole family was up in arms to protect the fame and reputation of the one assailed.

But brotherhood is a composite; it is made up of many qualities. Brotherhood implies understanding, loyalty, love, unselfishness, tolerance, helpfulness, and as we think over the relation of brotherhood we realize that it also includes justice and good will. Where, then, these three qualities, justice, good will and brotherhood, prevail, it follows as a natural result that peace must exist; it cannot be otherwise. And since brotherhood includes justice and good will, where brotherhood prevails, peace must prevail. Therefore, over the door of International House I would write these words, so simple but how pregnant with meaning : THAT BROTHERHOOD MAY PREVAIL.

Prevail where—in the United States ? In America ? But this, we must remember, is International House, the home of all nations; hence the meaning is clearly that INTERNATIONAL brotherhood may prevail. That Brotherhood may prevail THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. International House, the home of all nations, rising majestically above the greatest city in the world, standing for the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, shining forth as a beacon light to guide humanity into the safe harbor of world brotherhood, proclaiming to mankind the gospel of peace on earth and good will toward men.

This, then, is my conception of the work of International House; this is the wisdom which has led me to join hands with

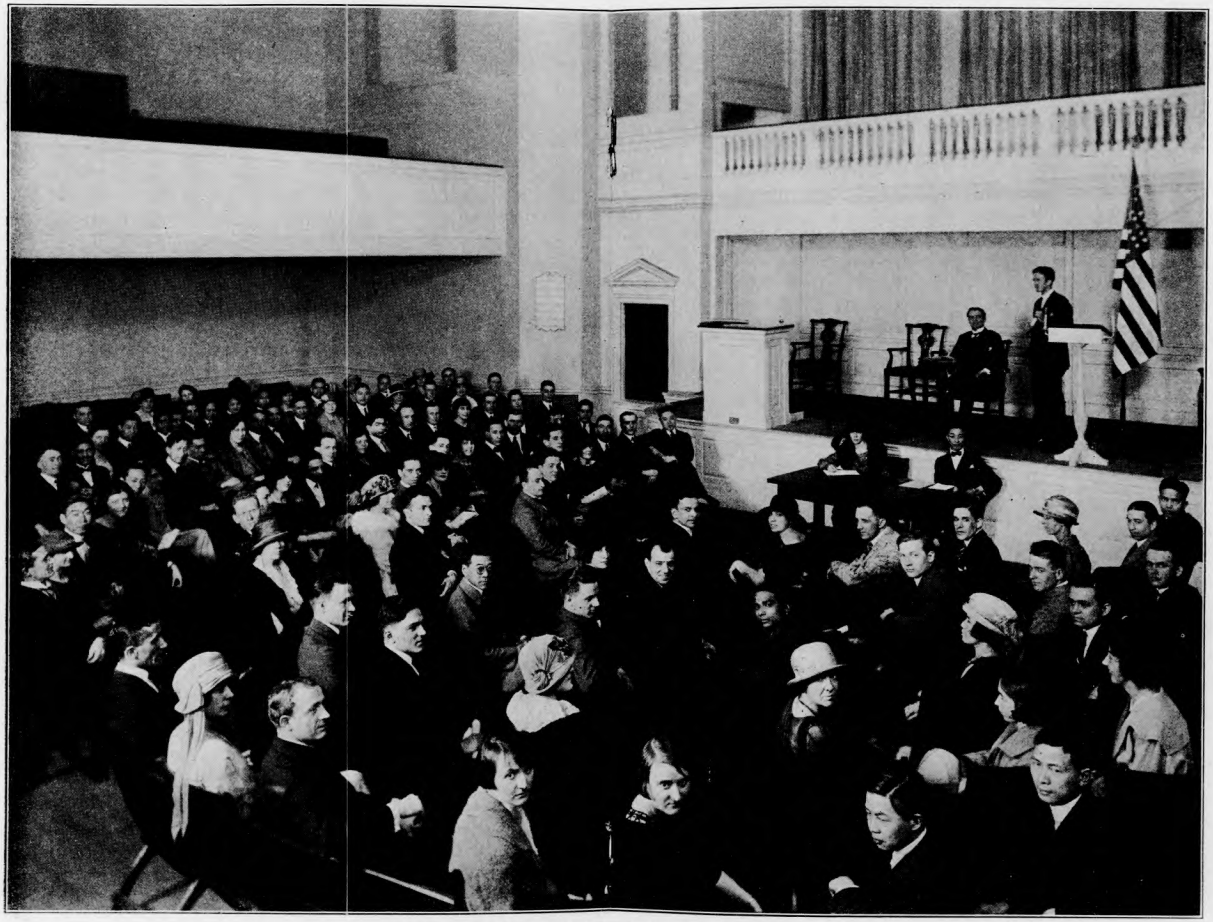
you that the wonderful dream for the Cosmopolitan Club which Mr. and Mrs. Edmonds have had these many years might be realized. Truly, this is a great privilege, a great opportunity, a great duty, that has come to us.

How shall the work of International House be carried out ? I know of but one way—by each one of us living each day in the spirit of brotherhood. Living. We may listen as people talk to us, as ministers preach to us, as teachers teach us, but much more powerful than words is example. So is every one who comes through the doors of International House, if every one who is now a member of this Club, or may be as the years go by, if everyone who avails of the privileges of the Club exemplifies brotherhood in the daily life, what a powerful influence will thus be exerted, not only in the individual life, but in the life of the community, of the home land to which you will all some day return, and of the world.

Brotherhood is one of the closest and finest relations of life. Let me enumerate again the qualities which go to make it up. First of all there is justice—justice to all in things little and great, to the weak and the downtrodden as well as to our equals and superiors. Justice in thought, in act, in word, for how often we do injustice in thought even if not in act or in word.

Secondly, good will. Good will towards all men, whatever their attitude towards us. How contagious is a smile. How quickly a happy face spreads sunshine and drives away the clouds. How easy it is to say a kind word, and how far a kind act goes.

The third quality is understanding. What a vast amount of life's bitterness and enmity results from a lack of understanding, just because we do not try to put ourselves in the other person's place, to get his point of view, to acquaint ourselves with his problems, to comprehend his motives. If you will pardon a personal reference, may I illustrate this point by speaking of an incident which occurred during the days of the war. It was my privilege on many occasions to speak to the soldiers in the training camps, and after speaking I was always glad to shake hands with any men who cared to give me the opportunity. One night as I stood in a group of men talking



THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSEMBLY

Composed of two representatives each from 70 countries, giving it the distinction of being the most representative body in the world for the discussion of international affairs. Organized under the auspices of the Intercollegiate Cosmopolitan Club of the City of New York.

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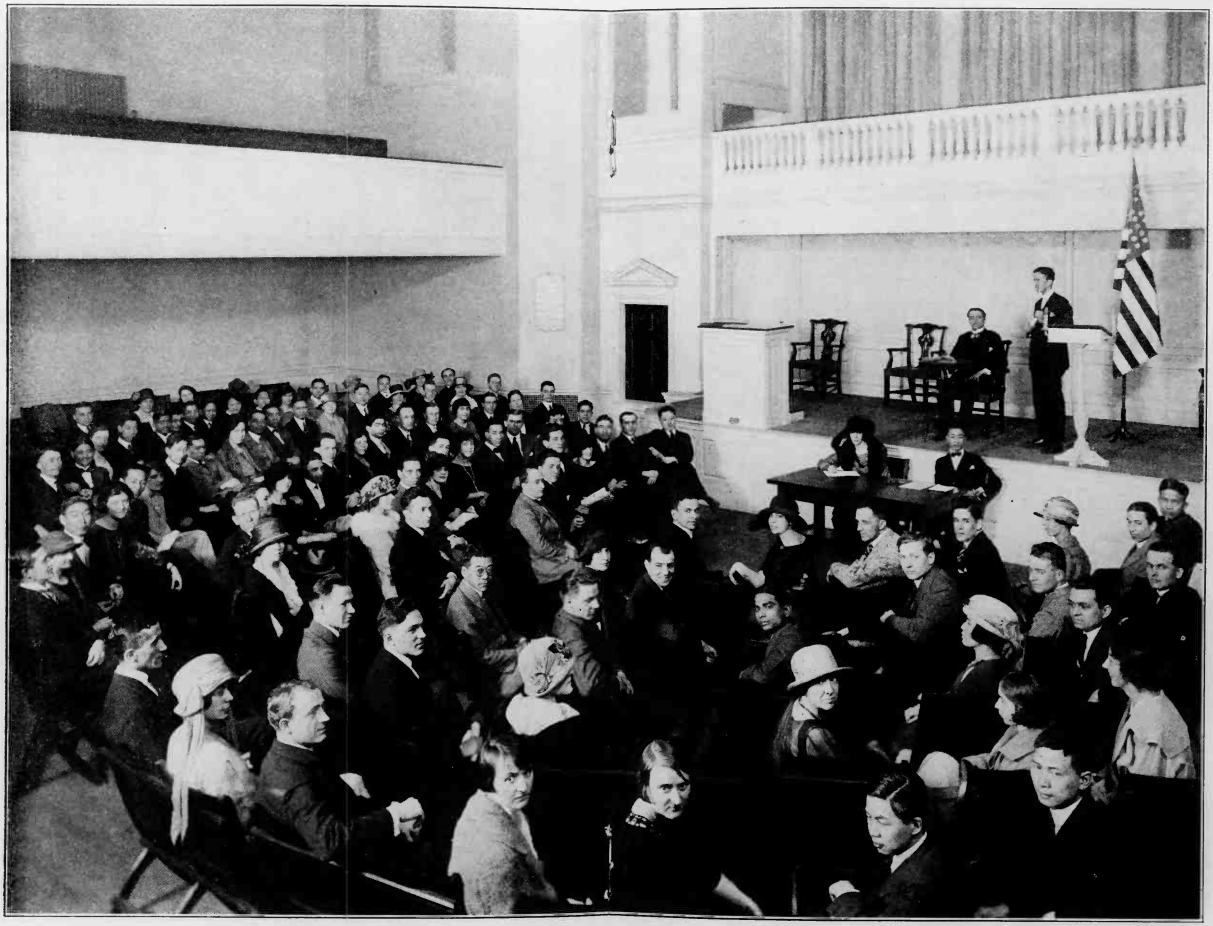

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and shaking hands, an Italian in khaki came to the Y. M. C. A. secretary and said, "Which is this man Rockefeller?" The secretary replied, "That is he, down there in the group of men." Whereupon the Italian soldier walked around the room outside of the group; he stopped and he watched and he listened; and then coming back to the secretary, he said, in the vernacular of the camp, "Aw, quit your kiddin'. That's not him. Which is he?" And the secretary said, "Yes, that is he." "Why," said the Italian, "that's not a devil, that's a man." He had never seen me; he had heard bitter things about the Rockefellers, he believed them; and then when he saw I was just a man like himself, struggling, trying, seeking to do right, he no longer believed what he had heard, but what he saw; he understood.

The fourth quality is loyalty. How the heart of the Man of Nazareth must have been rent when Judas, one of the twelve, betrayed Him; when Peter, loyal Peter, denied Him. What a splendid quality is loyalty—the man that you can count on, the friend that you know will stand by you no matter what comes. I remember a letter written by a father to his son, which ran in its closing phrases something like this: "My son, whatever you do, whatever trouble you get into, if you will always come to me and tell me the truth, whether you are right or wrong, I will stand by you to the limit." Who does not admire and crave loyalty?

Then, fifthly, there is love; brotherly love—not a weak, sentimental quality, but strong and virile; a quality not to be ashamed of, but to be proud of. Love is the greatest thing in the world. Where there is love there cannot be strife, there cannot be bitterness, there cannot be warfare. Love implies confidence, faith, trust. Love is the essence of true religion, for God is love. If we truly love God it follows as the day the night that we will love our brother men.

The sixth attribute is unselfishness—putting the other man's interests first; doing the kind thing for your brother whether it means a sacrifice or not; forgetting oneself, helping the other person, following the Golden Rule.

Seventh, tolerance. Oh, how much we all need that quality, of which we see so little in these days. How quick we are to pass judgment, to defame on hearsay one whom

we have never seen; to believe ill of someone we see every day because we do not know the facts. How unkind, how cruel that is. Why not give the other person the benefit of the doubt; say nothing if we cannot say something kind. Yes, tolerance helps mightily to make life happy and bright and hopeful.

Finally, helpfulness—service. If love is the greatest thing in the world, surely helpfulness or service is the next greatest thing. Too often people try to make themselves believe that happiness comes from having, from getting, from possessing. But real happiness comes from giving, from doing for others, from helping our fellows.

These, then, are the qualities which combine to make up brotherhood. Each year some of you will be returning to your home land, and others will take the places here which you vacate. Great will be your value to the countries whence you came, which in many instances sent you forth to perfect yourselves in some branch of human knowledge, that you might be better fitted for large responsibilities and positions of leadership at home. But infinitely greater will be your influence for good if you go back to the home land to live and to propagate this spirit of human brotherhood. As weary travelers wend their way up the mountain side, whether they come from the north or the south, from the east or from the west, gradually, inevitably, their paths come closer together. For, as has so beautifully been said, "All paths meet on the mountain top."

So as I follow my vision of International House into the far distant future, this is what I see: I see the mission of International House, "That Brotherhood May Prevail," extending each year in ever widening circles; I see other such houses springing up in the international student communities of the world, and all these centres joining hands with the various endeavors which are aiming to promote brotherhood; and I see the tide of brotherhood rising slowly, steadily, higher and higher, until at length all nations meet on the mountain top of world brotherhood, recognizing the Eternal Spirit which all worship, as their common Father.

The office of the Intercollegiate Cosmopolitan Club located heretofore at 2929 Broadway was moved May 1st to the new building. Mail should be addressed to "International House, Riverside Drive, New York."

Telephone, Morningside 8201

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